

figures were often carved, as an expression of nai'Ve ideas and faiths, and in pure realism, which were frankly obscene. Paintings and stained glass often represented similar objects. In the second half of the sixteenth century such objects were removed, or covered, or modified. It may be that the notion of obscenity developed sooner in respect to literature than in respect to art. Susemihl¹ suggests that the lost tales of Miletus may have been obscene, and also the tales of Paxamos, and that their disappearance may be due to a war on them on this account. Literature would furnish food to the mind. It would not deal with fact. The popular judgment seems long to have refused to admit that facts of structure and function which were universally human could be put under a taboo and made improper to be known and seen. What is familiar tends to remain in our overconsciousness only. The same is true of what offends one's taste and from which one averts attention, although it cannot be caused to cease, like profane language. The cases of toleration of what would now be considered obscene are to be explained in this way.

477. Symbols in Asia. " In

ancient times obscene
 symbols
 were used without offense to
 denote sex." ² Such symbols
 were
 very common in western Asia.
 They are very common now in
 India. A Chinese woman's
 foot, an Arab woman's face, a
 Tuareg
 man's mouth, is obscene to
 persons educated in any one
 of those
 taboos, because it always is,
 and ought to be, concealed.
 It is
 not obscene to us. On the
 other hand, the lingam in
 India is
 obscene to us, but not to
 Hindoos who have never
 learned any
 taboo in regard to it. An egg
 or a seed might have been
 made
 obscene in some group on
 account of its connection with
 repro-
 duction, if that connection
 had been developed in dogma
 and
 usage. An Englishman would
 never think of the garter as un-
 seemly, but non-English men
 and women have thought it
 such.
 The crucifix shows us how
 conventionalization and
 familiariza-
 tion set aside all the
 suggestion which an artifact
 really carries.
 The figure of a naked man
 dying in torture is purely
 horrible
 and repulsive. No one could
 get edification from an
 artistic

¹ *Griech. Lit. in der
 Alexandrinerzeit*, II,
 574.

² W. R. Smith, *Relig. of
 the Semites*, 457.